

## Message Text

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FROM AG OFFICER

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SUBJECT: PRC: FIRST REPORTS OF THE 1978 RAPESEED HARVEST

REPORT NO. HK-8026; CODE 6AL

1. FOUR OF CHINA'S SEVEN LEADING PRODUCERS OF RAPESEED HAVE REPORTED LARGE INCREASES IN OUTTURN. YIELD AND OUTPUT WERE SAID TO BE RESPECTIVELY 40 PERCENT AND 90 PERCENT ABOVE 1977 IN CHEKIANG, SETTING A NEW RECORD (HANGCHOW, 6/21/78). HUPEH HARVESTED 70 PERCENT TO 80 PERCENT MORE RAPESEED THAN LAST YEAR (WUHAN, #/10.78 AND NCNA, 6/11.78). A "GREAT BUMPER HARVEST" WAS GATHERED ON A RECORD 384,200 HECTARES IN HUNAN (CHANGSHA, 4/19/78 AND 6/13/78). OUTTURN ON THE 200,000 HECTARES OF RAPESEED WAS CLAIMED TO BE UP BY 50 PERCENT IN KIANGSU (NANCHANG, 5.18.78). THE ACREAGE SOWN TO RAPESEED WAS OVER 20 PERCENT GREATER THAN LAST YEAR IN HUNAN AND KIANGSI (PEOPLE'S DAILY, 9/11/77). ANOTHER MAJOR PRODUCER, KIANGSU, REPORTED THAT THE RAPESEED CROP WAS GROWING BETTER THIS YEAR (NANKING, 3/11/78). THE REMAINING MAJOR PRODUCERS -- ZECHWAN AND HUNNAN -- HAVE NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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ON THIS YEAR'S RAPESEED CROP AS YET.

2. ANHWEI, A RELATIVELY MINOR PRODUCER, REPORTED A RECORD OUTTURN (HONEI, #/17/78). NONE OF THE OTHER LESS IMPORTANT GROWERS HAVE

ISSUED A HARVEST REPORT. OUTTURN PROBABLY FAILED TO MATCH THE GOOD 1977 CROP IN KWANGTUNG AND FUKIEN DUE TO THE COOL, DAMP, CLOUDY WEATHER THAT PREVAILED OVER THE TWO PROVINCES THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER.

3. SIGNIFICANTLY, CHEKIANG IS THE ONLY MAJOR PRODUCER OF PAPSEED

TO CLAIM A RECORD OUTTURN DESPITE THE VERY LARGE INCREASES THAT HAVE BEEN REPORTED. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE ACREAGE OF RAPSEED MAY NOT HAVE REGAINED THE LEVEL OF THE EARLY 1970'S AND THAT GROWING CONDITIONS, WHILE MUCH IMPROVED OVER LAST YEAR, WERE NOT OVERLY FAVORABLE. THIS IS ALSO AN INDICATION OF HOW SERIOUSLY DEPRESSED THE OUTTURN OF RAPSEED MUST HAVE BEEN LAST YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CROP THIS YEAR WAS SAID TO BE ONLY COMPARATIVELY GOOD IN HUPEH DESPITE A 70 TO 80 PERCENT INCREASE IN OUTPUT.

4. KIANGSI, HUNAN, AND HUPEH HAVE REPORTED SIZEABLE INCREASES IN ACREAGE. THE CLAIM OF A 40 PERCENT INCREASE IN YIELD COUPLED WITH A 90 PERCENT INCREASE IN PRODUCTION INDICATES A MUCH LARGER RAPSEED ACREAGE IN CHEKIANG AS WELL. WHILE A PART OF THE IMPROVED OUTTURN OF RAPSEED IN THOSE PROVINCES THAT HAVE REPORTED THUS FAR IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASED ACREAGE, HIGHER YIELDS CLEARLY ACCOUNT FOR MOST OF THE INCREASE.

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5. RAPSEED NORMALLY ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF CHINA'S OUTPUT OF OILSEEDS (EXCLUDING SOYBEANS AND COTTONSEED). THUS, THE IMPROVED OUTTURN OF RAPSEED, EVEN IF THE CROP AS A WHOLE IS ONLY COMPARATIVELY GOOD, MAY ALLEVIATE CHINA'S NEED TO IMPORT VEGETABLE OIL. THE RESPITE, HOWEVER, COULD BE TEMPORARY SHOULD GROWING CONDITIONS DETERIORATE FOR THE BALANCE OF THIS YEAR'S HARVEST OF OILSEEDS.

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